



MEMO / NOTE DE SERVICE

To / Destinataire	Mayor and Members of Council	File/N° de fichier:
From / Expéditeur	Donna Gray General Manager Community and Social Services	
Subject / Objet	Community resources available in response to demonstrations and occupation	Date: 25 February 2022

Further to the discussion of the regular Council meeting of February 23, 2022, the purpose of this memo is to share current efforts by Community and Social Services (CSS) staff to support residents affected by the recent demonstrations and occupation. Also included is information related to supports provided by the United Way and an upcoming community event, which is being provided and led by the Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition, The ACB Wellness Resource Centre, Somerset West Community Health Centre, Canadian Women of Color Leadership Network and United for All Coalition

Ongoing work by Community and Social Services

Leveraging the Human Needs Task Force structure and partnerships established for the COVID-19 pandemic response, staff have engaged with Ottawa Public Health and key community agencies to connect and assist residents. Common and persistent impacts to residents included: food security, transportation, safety, and mental health. Staff worked closely with partners to support and coordinate services and information, including emergency food deliveries and connecting residents to counselling, health, financial and employment services. Targeted and temporary financial, employment and social services support continues to be provided to downtown residents in need. Additional information is attached to this memo.

These last few weeks have been extremely difficult for those who live and work in the downtown core, and very unsettling for all of us living in Ottawa and the surrounding municipalities. There are resources available, including:

- [Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region](#) support line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at 613-238-3311, in French there is [Tel-Aide Outaouais](#) - 613-741-6433
- [Counselling Connect](#) which offers free counselling sessions over the phone or video call the same day or the next day.
- [The Walk-In Counselling Clinic](#) (reachable by phone at 613-755-2277) offers free counselling without an appointment. Sessions are offered in French, English, Arabic, Spanish, Somali, Cantonese, and Mandarin by phone or video call.

- [AccessMHA](#) help residents over the age 16 years connect to mental health and substance use health services.
- [1Call 1Click](#) help connect children, youth and their families (from birth to 21 years of age) to mental health and addiction services and resources.
- [Mental Health Crisis Line](#) – 1-866-996-0991.

Community resource information is also available at ottawa.ca and on the Ottawa Public Health [website](#).

United Way

United Way of East Ontario has been in touch with downtown-based agencies to understand, support and amplify their challenges. During the occupation, they helped promote agency partner services including counselling resources, crisis hotlines and social service resources like 211.

As a part of an immediate effort, the United Was [has announced](#) an initial \$50,000 investment which will help cover unplanned costs, including facility security, the cost of food hampers and delivery capacity, hotel rentals, as well as transportation for clients and staff. The organization has also committed to working with partners long-term to ensure access to mental health and wellness resources to support those most in need.

Community-led event

Provided and led by the Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition, The ACB Wellness Resource Centre, Somerset West Community Health Centre, Canadian Women of Color Leadership Network and United for All Coalition, a session for the community to share experiences, hear from others impacted by recent events and learn about available resources is being held on Monday, February 28. For more details, please visit: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/come-together-ottawa-a-conversation-with-community-tickets-265488291627>.

Next Steps

We know our community has the knowledge and experience to help individuals and families cope with the impact and stresses triggered by this terrible event and that we are a strong and resilient community, but many people are hurting. We are starting to look at how to support the community with the process of healing. We're committed to our ongoing work with Ottawa Public Health and other community agencies to help those who are struggling. I will be reaching out to Members of Council in the coming days to gauge community readiness and to ensure that the needs of the community are met in this process.

Sincerely,

Donna Gray
General Manager
Community and Social Services

cc. Steve Kanellakos, City Manager
Senior Leadership Team
Dr. Vera Etches, Medical Officer of Health, Ottawa Public Health
Community and Social Services Department Leadership Team